SEAPOWER, TECHNOLOGY AND TRADE

STUDIES in TURKISH MARITIME HISTORY

EDITORS
DEJANIRAH COUTO   FEZA GUNERGUN   MARIA PIA PEDANI

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İSTİKLAL CAD. NO: 199/A BEYOĞLU
İSTANBUL / TÜRKİYE
TEL: +90 212 249 88 93   FAX: +90 212 243 84 82
info@denizlerkitabevi.com   www.denizlerkitabevi.com

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THE CORSAIRS IN THE SERVICE OF THE GRAND TURK: "MEN OF THE FRONTIER"

Emilio Sola

In the classical Mediterranean of the 16th century, occurred an interesting socio-economic phenomenon with important political repercussions: *corsarismo* (the corsair's craft) at the service of the Grand Turk (Sultan Süleyman I). *Muladíes,* to use the terminology of the medieval Hispanic/Andalusian frontier, or renegade corsairs, which contemporaries called "Turks" by profession (as opposed to born-Muslims, Ottomans by nation) constituted the most important element of this Mediterranean frontier phenomenon.

One may think that there was a tradition of incorporating or integrating foreigners into Muslim societies, and here Ibn Khaldun's analyses are exemplary: for instance, the Ottoman *devşirme* institution, which some flexibly termed the "child levy", played an important role in military control of the frontiers or distant territories; but the case of maritime *Muladíes,* many of them captains or corsair *reis* (*arráeces*), were of a different character from that of the military world of the janissary, products of *devşirme*. Corsairs in the service of the Grand Turk, born Muslims or renegades, enjoyed a relative autonomy compared with the military organisation of the janissaries. Corsair organisation was depicted by the Italian historian Ciro Manca as a "mode of corsair production" in the classical maritime Berber cities after Lepanto, where their social position could be considered dominant or determining.[1]

In my opinion, no new work has yet improved the article published by Alberto Tenenti in *Rivista Storica Italiana,* on *corsarismo* at the end of the 15th and the first years of the 16th century, when the Spanish initiated their offensive in the Maghreb, with Cisneros and the count Pedro Navarro as principal protagonists, mainly during a period between the conquest of Oran and Mers el-Kébir in 1509 and the subsequent installation in Algiers of the elder of the Barbarossa brothers, the one-armed Oruç Reis, in 1516.[2] Several great maritime figures of the 16th century Mediterranean emerged from the environment of this port, such as Piri Reis, nephew of Kemal Reis, who had a long maritime career extending through the 1550's, including the finest and earliest examples of Ottoman cartography since the 1520's, or Sinan Pasha and Piyale Pasha in the middle of the century or Turgut Reis [Dragut], the devourer of the Sicilian wheat, in the words of Fernand Braudel,[3] who died at the siege of Malta in 1565, after a glorious career. But here we are more interested in examining renegade seamen, "Turks by profession" in Antonio de Sosa's words, or *marines muladíes* (the "*renegados*" (renegades) of our classic literature) since they were more properly the corsairs at the service of the Great Turk.

As a starting point, it is suitable to concentrate on this apparent paradox of the classical Mediterranean of the 16th century. In the Christian Hispanic – Habsburg world, the destiny of the new Christian of Muslim origin

1 Ciro Manca, *Il modelo di sviluppo economico della città marittime barbaresche dopo Lepanto* (Naples: Giannini Ed., 1982). See, especially, chapter IV.

2 We deal with this matter in *Cervantes y la Berbería. Cervantes, mundo turco-berberisco y servicios secretos en la época de Felipe II*, E. Sola y J.F. de la Peña (eds.), (Madrid: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1996). See the biography by Miguel Angel Bunes Ibarra, *Los Barbarroja. Corsarios del Mediterráneo* (Madrid: Aldebarán, 2004).

3 Piri Reis, *Libro para navegantes o Kitab-i Bahriye* (Madrid: Fundación Estatal Fomento del Mar, Centro Nacional de Información Geográfica, 2007) with digitalization of the ottoman original. See also the allusion to Dragut, in the book of Fernand Braudel, *El Mediterráneo y el mundo mediterráneo en la época de Felipe II,* vol.2 (Madrid: F.C.E., 1976) p. 344.

is problematic; the unhappy "nation of the Moriscos" as named by Cervantes[4], on the contrary, in the Muslim Ottoman world offers numerous biographies of new Muslims or *Muladíes* that even today we might label as successful men, and the majority of these characters are mostly associated with the corsairs at the service of the Grand Turk.

The brothers Barbarossa and the first generation of corsairs-muladíes

We can see that contemporary sources considered Oruç and Hayrettin Barbarossa, who both arrived in the Western Mediterranean at the beginning of the 16th century, as men of fortune and transformed the story of these self-made men into a myth of social ascension. Natives of the Eastern Mediterranean, Greek/Turks of the island of Mitylene-Midilli, their installation in Algiers was narrated as a political operation that was consolidated upon the death of the Spanish King Fernando the Catholic in 1516. The historian Prudencio de Sandoval, for instance, makes forceful comments: "*Diose a gobernar haciendo muchas cosas de hecho: batió moneda, acrecentó las rentas, hizo armada y llamose rey".*[5]

While Oruç completed the first phase of the process, the transformation of a corsair into a sovereign of a territory, his brother Hayrettin realized the second phase after his death: he came under the wing of the Ottomans and put himself at the service of the Grand Turk.

The rise of Algiers, the corsair republic or "*repubblica popolar*" in Salvago's terms,[6] at the beginning of the 17th century could not be checked in spite of the Spanish efforts that had already started in Cisneros' life, the real instigator of the Spanish offensive in the Maghreb, as archbishop of Toledo and regent of the Spanish monarchy after the death of King Fernando. After the failure of the first two naval attempts against the city that only served to fill the city's prisons with captives, the expeditions of Vera and Moncada, many people passed into Muslim hands, increasing the Ottoman-Berber forces composed of Ottomans, Muslims and *Muladíes*. Several *Moriscos* who were expelled from Andalusia and Valencia went to the central Maghreb where they accepted the leadership of the Barbarossa brothers. It was undoubtedly from this milieu that arose one of the increasingly popular myths of these corsairs at the service of the Grand Turk; the fact that Barbarossa's mother was a Christian, and even - in a variant of the myth gathered by Mármol Carvajal[7] - that she was called Catalina and that she was supposed have been born in Marchena, an Andalusian village. Here was outlined a myth of social ascent on the frontier, framed in a way which reflected that nascent reality and which, within a couple of generations, had achieved a peculiar classicism.

After the fall of the Spanish fortress of Peñon de Argel in 1529, which had been an obstruction to maritime activity in the port city, Hayrettin consolidated his rule in Algeria. More corsair *reis* joined him as the attractiveness of his successes increased. Of these, three are worthy of special attention: Cacciadiavolo, who died while retreating from Tunis in the face of the Habsburg attack in 1535, Sinan Reis, who, despite being nicknamed "the Jew", was from Smyrna and Salih Reis from Alexandria, who reached the zenith of his career as the Pasha of Algiers, whose territories he enlarged by conquering Bugia, the modern Bedjaia, from the Spaniards.

When Hayrettin Barbarossa established himself in Istanbul as the Admiral of the Ottoman fleet in 1534, he left one of his renegades in the government of Algiers, Hasan Ağa, one of the first of these corsair *Muladíes* to achieve the Mediterranean myth through fortune, and whose singular biography was gathered by Antonio de Sosa in Algiers forty years later with the vivacity of details of the remembered mythicized frontier stories.[8] Hasan Ağa alone constitutes the archetype of a *Muladí* corsair, caught up to the service of the Grand Turk. Barbarossa captured him as a young boy while pillaging a village of Sardinia; since this Sardinian was "*como era de muy*

4 *Cervantes y la Berbería*, p. 187 sq.

5 Prudencio de Sandoval, *Historia de la vida y hechos del emperador Carlos V*, Carlos Seco Serrano (ed.), (Madrid: Ed.Atlas, 1955-1956), Libro II, XXIX. See also *Cervantes y la Berbería*, p.44. ["He begins to rule with many things: stamping money, increasing rents, recruiting an army and calling himself a king"].

6 G.B. Salvago, *Africa overo Barbaría, relazione al doge di Venezia sulle reggenze di Algeri e di Tunisi*, A. Sacerdoti (ed.), (Padova: A.Milani, 1937).

7 L. Marmól Carvajal, *Descripción general de Africa* (ed. facsimil of vol.I) (Madrid: CSIC, 1953 [1573]), fol. 179.

8 Haedo, Diego de, *Topografía e historia general de Argel*, 3 vols., Ignacio Bauer y Landauer (ed.), (Madrid: Sociedad de Bibliófilos españoles, 1927), vol. 1, pp. 277 sq.

buen talle y hermoso, le hizo luego capón (...) y le crió siempre en su casa como si fuera su propio hijo".[9] For his value, "*le hizo su Chaya, esto es, mayordomo de su casa, y él era el señor de cuando el Barbarroja tenía. Luego le hizo Bilerbey, esto es, capitán general de la guerra*"[10] in charge of collecting taxes and tributes from the tribes in the vicinity of Algiers, "*las mahalas por el reino*" (the *mahalla*s of the kingdom). He appeared as a "*hombre de hecho y animoso y de muy gentil juicio y gobierno*",[11] as his *kâhya* or right hand man of his house in charge of which he stayed when Hayrettin moved to Istanbul in 1533. He also remained at the head of the government, a position he kept given that Hayrettin did not return from Istanbul, where he became the Ottoman Grand Admiral. His figure reaches a mythical apex with the expedition of Charles V against Algiers in 1541. This castrated Sardinian had become the victor of the Emperor, with such a commitment to courage and loyalty to his new companions and coreligionists that he evolved into a *vox-populi* - something peculiar to the frontier, as is gathered by the varying correspondences of the different chroniclers and narrators of that reality.

The popular legend of *Azanaga (Asán Aga)*, transmitted orally, was still alive at the time when both Sosa and Cervantes heard this version in Algiers, and Sosa's description is the most significant:

"Con una armada tan grande y con tanta y tan valerosa gente de soldados de todas las naciones cristianas, y él (Azanaga) con poco más de tres mil turcos, aunque tenía muchos andaluces y moros, no solamente no se conoció en él temor, mas cabalgando de continuo por la ciudad, que estaba toda desmayada, daba él solo esfuerzo y muy grande ánimo a todos".[12]

"*Y como el Emperador le enviase con don Lorenzo Manuel, un caballero principal español, a decir que si le daba la ciudad le prometía que le haría muchas mercedes, y a todos cuantos turcos tenía, le respondió donosamente, sonriéndose, que tenía por un gran necio aquel que de su enemigo tomase consejo, mas que él esperaba en Dios que la venida del Emperador sería para con él a ganar un gran nombre y perpetua fama (...)*" [13]

Then, Sosa highlights, in accordance with a popular Berber tradition, their bravery against the Knights of Malta, another clear characteristic of these characters from the frontier men, normally of humble origins or underprivileged sectors of society, as were the majority of *Muladíes* at the service of the Grand Turk:

"*Cuando los caballeros de Malta, hecho cuerpo, rompieron una buena cantidad de turcos y llegaron hasta a enclavar los puñales en la puerta de Babazón (una de las puertas de la Argel sitiada, otro lugar común de estos mitos de frontera, atribuido el hecho a otros personajes y en otros momentos), el Asanaga fue el que, acudiendo con gran priesa y peleando en un caballo, hizo retirar los caballeros; y siguiendo tras ellos fuera de los muros como media milla, mató más de ciento y cincuenta (...)"*. [14]

And still the process of creating a myth, perfectly captured in the story of Sosa:

"*Y, así, hoy día, el lugar do cayeron muertos estos caballeros peleando con gran ánimo, lo muestran los mismos turcos y le llaman "la sepultura de los caballeros(...)*".[15]

His death, in 1543, with 56 years old, after a decade at the head of the city, left a memory of government of Algiers, "*sus tierras y vasallos, en toda paz y justicia*" [his lands and vassals, in all peace and justice]. Sosa adds, four decades later, a confirmation of that *corsair-muladí* myth rooted in Barbarossa:

9 *Ibid.* ["of a very good figure and beautiful, he got castrated...and he raised him always in his home as if he had been his own son."]

10 *Ibid.* ["he appointed him his *kâhya*, that is the steward of his house, and he was the master of everything Barbarossa had. Then he made him a Governor-General or *Beylerbeyi.*"]

11 *Ibid.* ["a man of fact and spirited and of very elegant judgement and government."]

12 *Ibid.*, I, pp.278-279. [(*Azanaga*) "fought against the Emperor Charles V, who had such a large fleet and with many brave soldiers of all the Christian nations, and he (*Azanaga*) with just over 3,000 Turks, although he had many Andalusian and Moorish, not only did he not know fear, but riding continuously through the city, which was totally dismayed, he only gave courage and much encouragement to all."]

13 Ibid. ["And when the Emperor Charles V sent Manuel Lorenzo, a major Spanish gentleman, to say that if the city surrendered, the Emperor would give many favors to *Azanaga* and all his Turks, *Azanaga* wryly replied, smiling that "it is a fool who takes counsel from the enemy," and that he hoped in God that the emperor would come there, to obtain and win great renown and perpetual fame."]

14 *Ibid.* ["When the Knights of Malta came in platoon, they killed large numbers of Turks and they nailed their daggers at the door of Babazón (one of the gates of the besieged city of Algiers, another common place of these myths of frontier, appearing in the stories of other prominent figures and in other moments), Hasan Ağa was the one who, going with great haste, and fighting from horseback, forced the knights to withdraw, and by pursuing them outside the walls for about a half mile, he killed over 150."]

15 *Ibid.* ["And thus, today, the place where these gentlemen were killed fighting with great courage, is shown by the Turks themselves, and called 'the tomb of the knights"].

"*Y hoy día dan testimonio muchos que le conocieron que ningún Rey de Argel hasta hoy fue más recto ni justo*".[16]

The final portrait that Sosa does of Hasan Ağa abounds in this positive picture of the Berber *Muladí* as a positive hero or myth of social ascent*:*

"*Era Asán Aga de edad de 56 años, pequeño de cuerpo pero muy bien proporcionado, de lindos ojos y facciones de cara y muy blanco; fue amantísimo de justicia, y por esta causa usó de muy grandes crueldades, por lo cual fue de todos muy temido; era hombre muy liberal y amigo de hacer bien a los pobres. Está enterrado en Argel fuera de la puerta de Babaluete, en una cuba grande o sepultura que un renegado suyo y mayordomo de su casa le hizo después de muerto*".[17]

The former slave of Barbarossa, Hasan Ağa, the brave and righteous Sardinian of humble origin, made himself the ruler of Algeria. He had the profile of a new Machiavellian Prince, a *Muladí* and a man of fortune with all the characteristics of the popular myth of the Mediterranean frontier land. Children of a potter or a small merchant, the Barbarossa brothers, corsairs and founders of a new political regime on the forgotten frontier of North Africa under the protection of the Ottoman Sultan, constitute a stark contrast with the famous Genoese family of the Dorias, who were related even to Byzantine Emperors and the Knights of Malta, who produced the finest sailors of the 16th century Mediterranean and who commanded the Spanish Navy. Thus the *Muladíes* turned into a popular frontier myth as a counter-hero in a *mundus inversus*, a world upside down. These were contradictory forces of attraction and repulsion, but forces that equally mobilized people.

*The successors of the brothers Barbarossa: a new generation of corsairs-***muladíes**

One could say that the Sardinian Hasan Ağa (1488-1543) inaugurated a new model of Berber politics in connection with the North African corsair group, composed of *Muladíes* at the service of the Grand Turk. He created a model similar to Barbarossa's saga, a model that would be successful in the future**.** He would be the tutor of Barbarossa's son, Hasan (and therefore a *kuloğlu*), the future Governor-General of Algeria, three times in a quarter century (1544-1568). In this period Berber society experienced a certain classicism being dominated by *Muladíes*, the hated renegades, the reviled people in their lands of origin, especially Spanish - often *Moriscos* - and Italians. Hasan Pasha's Algiers reached the highest level of religious and ethnical mixture and cosmopolitism where many *Muladíes* started to appear among the most notable corsairs of the city; they would soon achieve important positions in the Ottoman Navy and the Arsenal in Istanbul, following the Ottoman defeat at the Battle of Lepanto.

We could speak of a certain classicism in Berber society of which the son of Barbarossa, Hasan Pasha (*koloğlu* or son of Turk and a Moorish woman, married at the end of the fifties to a daughter of the Kabil or Berber King of Cuco) is very much a symbol. Once again, the literary portrait of Antonio de Sosa (published by Haedo) is the most suitable in understanding the true frontier-man:

"*Cuando Asán Bajá acabó de reinar, que fueron cinco años (1567), sería de edad de cincuenta y un años, y murió después en edad de cincuenta y cinco. Fue bajo de cuerpo, muy gordo, y tanto que para enflaquecer hizo muchas diligencias y remedios, y comía muy poco. Era de color muy blanco, de grande ojos, muy cejudo, como su padre, de mucha barba y negra. Ceceaba de la lengua, que le daba mucha gracia. Hablaba muchas lenguas, y todas como si fueran naturales; y particularmente, hablando español ninguno dijera sino que realmente lo era. Fue hombre muy liberal y agradecido, y se preció mucho de honrar y engrandecer a sus criados; y, así, la mayor parte de los alcaides y renegados más principales que hoy día hay en Argel fueron suyos y de su casa (...)*".[18]

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16 *Ibid.* ["And today many who knew him testify that no King of Algiers up to today was more honest or right"]

17 *Ibid.*, I, pp. 283-284. ["Hasan Ağa was 56 years old, small but with a very well-proportioned body, with nice eyes and a very white face, was most loving of Justice, and for this cause did very great cruelties, so that he was greatly feared of all, was a very liberal man and a friend of doing good to the poor. He is buried in Algiers outside the Babaluete door, in a large tomb or grave that a renegade, steward of his house, made for him after his death."]

18 *Ibid.*, I, p. 343. ["When he finished his reign, Hasan Ağa (1567), was 51 years old, and he would die later at age 55. He was a short man, very portly, he tried many formalities and remedies in order to become thinner, and he was eating very little. He was very pale, with big eyes, bushy eyebrows, like his father, and a great black beard. He was lisped of tongue, which gave him much grace. He spoke many languages, all as if they were totally natural to him, and particularly when speaking Spanish, none could say of what nationality he really was. He was a very liberal and grateful man, and he prized very highly the honouring and magnifying of his servants, and most of the governors and the major renegades in Algiers today were of his house."]

Although Hasan Pasha conforms very well to this type of rising frontiersman, he was not a *Muladí* as was his predecessor and mentor, Hasan Ağa. His successor to the first government of Algiers was another companion of his father, an early Corsair, the Alexandrian Salih Pasha, one of the most valued marine veterans and to some observers, even superior to his somewhat younger contemporary Turgut. He was an old man – "all hoary like a pigeon" – but very courageous; he conquered Bougie, which was controlled by the Spanish, in 1555, and died of fever while preparing to go on to Oran next year. It is within this dramatic death that the Algerian regime was forced to rely on the support of the *Muladíes* to survive, mainly through two unique characters, the *beylerbeyi* known as the Warden Hasan Corso, a confidant of the late Salih Pasha, and the young Calabrian Yusuf, both major players, with other pirates and *Muladíes* wardens during this time of Corsair tragedy in Algiers. On the death of Salih Pasha, his henchman Corso Hassan was elected by the Ottomans and the Janissaries "by King and governor until the Turkish ordered otherwise", as a man of experience, "for his good parts and very loved condition"; he reluctantly agreed to take on the role after many of his peers insisted that he do so. A new link in the myth of the privateer-king *Muladí* thus lived in Berber memory and was magnified in stature by an imaginative and sometimes delirious popular voice.

The crisis of the Algerian political regime upon Salih's death was very present in Berber memory some years later, as it was recalled by Sosa / Haedo. The situation would be saved with the arrival of the son of Barbarossa, Hasan Pasha during his second government in Algiers. The most negative opinions in the Berber memory are related to the Ottoman envoy (Techeoli in the statement of Sosa) who acted as a substitute to Salih Pasha. He killed all the *muladíes* of Hasan Corso's house who governed the principal geographical zones of Algiers: the warden of Bona (Annaba), the *Muladí* Mostafa Griego, the warden of Bougie (Bedjaia) and the *Muladí* Ali Sardo. Their own king of Algiers, Hasan Corso, was eliminated, already impaled or caught. Another *Muladí*, the warden of Tlemcen, Yusuf Calabrés, was in Algiers and avenged his companions, and above all his boss Hasan Corso. Yusuf chased the Ottoman envoy and killed him. His election by the Algerians, as the new leader who satisfied everyone with his liberality (whilst again waiting for orders from Istanbul) is also narrated by Sosa profiling the myth of the "republic corsaria" or "popular republic." After killing Techeoli Pasha, Yusuf Calabrés entered Algiers with his Ottomans and soldiers and was visited by the Ağa of the Janissaries, as well as by the principals of the city:

"*Y parte por el amor que tenían a la memoria de Asán Corso su amo, cuya muerte había vengado valientemente, y parte por la afición que por este hecho le tomaron, luego, sin más dilación, le declararon por Rey y Gobernador de Argel. Y el Isuf, que era, en efecto, mancebo de gentil espíritu, no queriendo ser vencido en este caso de virtud y liberalidad, cuando le fuese posible, luego aquel día repartió 10.000 escudos entre todos los genízaros, y lo mismo hizo el segundo día y el tercero, cuarto, quinto y sexto. De manera que en seis días les dio 60.000 escudos de oro, por lo cual tanto creció más el amor y afición que le tenían (...) Y el Isuf, con verse de un pobre mozo calabrés en tal estado y tan grande, la muerte, que todo abate y deshace, asechando nuestras vidas y contentos, lo volvió todo en tristeza y dolor. Porque en el último de los seis días, habiendo grande peste entonces en la ciudad, dio la landre al Isuf en una ingle, con tanta furia que en menos de veinte y cuatro horas perdió la vida y el Reino, con gran sentimiento de todos.*"[19]

The four short months of government in Algiers of Hasan Corso, plus another four months of Techeoli Pasha and the week of Calabrian Yusuf, which came to a tragic end, ended with six months of government of a senior Turkish Pasha Yahya, "a man sane and prudent" who had ruled with Salih Pasha and was chosen by the Janissaries whilst they were waiting for a new man from Istanbul, who would once again be Barbarossa's son, Hasan Pasha; his second Algerian government was initiated in June of 1557.

It was one of the first profound crises of the Algerian regime, and in the background there was a latent or clear opposition among the military men or janissaries, with their Ağa at the head, and privateers, mostly *Muladíes*, with the captain of the sea in front of Algiers. The Janissaries, soldiers with pay, claimed that

19 *Ibid.*, I, p. 324-325. ["And for the love that they had in memory of Hasan Corso their master, whose death had been avenged bravely, and also for the interest that for this they took, without delay, they declared him as King and Governor of Algiers. And Yusuf, who was, in effect, a youth of elegant spirit, not wanting to be overcome in this case of virtue and liberality, when it was possible, that day distributed 10,000 *escudos* among all the Janissaries, and he did the same thing the second day and the third, fourth, fifth and sixth days. So that in six days he gave to them 60,000 e*scudos* of gold, as a result of which the affection they had for him grew (...). And Yusuf, being a poor young Calabrian boy with such great status, died, which brings down and undoes everything, stalking our lives and happiness, turning everything into sadness and pain. Because in the last of the six days, there being a great plague in the city, Yusuf got a tumour in the groin, with such fury that in less than 24 hours he had lost the life and the Kingdom, with great emotion from all."]

they should also be able to share the benefits of privateering as *levent*s (marine soldiers) and privateers who participated in the work of collecting taxes for the Algiers controlled territory - the *garramas* - a task that was denied to them by the *Taifa* of privateers. In following crises of the Algerian governments one can always feel the same tension; the son of Barbarossa, Hasan Pasha, experienced a similar situation in 1561, when he was sent by the *Ağa* of the Janissaries to Istanbul chained with another of his trusted men, Aluchali Escandelisa or Escanderiza [Uluç Ali, later *beylerbeyi* of Alexandria] - also called Ali the Greek - in a real *coup d'état* between his second and third Algerian government.

Ali Pasha, a Calabrian-Muladí, captain of the sea in Istanbul, a new master of the frontier

The importance of the *Muladíes* among the Algerian corsairs did not stop increasing in the epoch of the son of Barbarossa (1544-1568), and reached its zenith with an exceptional figure, the Calabrian Ali Pasha [Kılıç Ali Pasha], who was the new master of the frontier for two decades. He represents the figure of the Berber corsair at the service of the Grand Turk who had reached the peak of his power in Istanbul.

Again, the biography of Dionisio [Galei], the future Ali Pasha (d. 1587) is an archetype of how a man of humble origin could rise in the frontier and then at the service of the Grand Turk, with a story similar to that of Hayrettin Barbarossa, half a century earlier. Immediately after his nomination as Governor-General of Algeria in 1568, in a moment of great tension in Spain due to the *Morisco* Revolt of Alpujarras. Philip II's secret service was mobilized in Calabria and compiled one of the first biographies of Ali Pasha known to us. It would fit with the *Muladí* slave myth; a slave who rises thanks to his virtue and value and becomes a ruler and lord of a territory. Once again, the profile of a new Machiavellian prince appears.

"*Aluchali, que agora es Rey de Argel, es natural de la tierra delle Castelle, de la provincia de Calabria Ultra; llamábase por nombre Dionisio Galea. El cual, teniendo de edad de 18 años, fue tomado del armada de Barbarroja, cuando se tomó su tierra, que fue en el año 1536, en el mes de agosto a los 28 de él. Fue tomado con él su madre, nombrada Pippa del Chicco, y su hermano (...)*".[20]

On this basis would his myth be woven, and it would come to be included in *Don Quixote* by Cervantes as a good man who had risen to the highest levels of power in the Ottoman Empire honorably. Antonio de Sosa also gave him high praise, as did Diego Suarez talking of "a renegade Turk from the Italian nation, Hasan named Zuri, who had long been captain of the Turks of Algiers". The Italian *Muladí* Zuri Hasan inspired the conversion to Islam of the Calabrian slave Dionisio [Galei], so that he may have a chance to get back at him after Zuri Hasan slapped him. This was the origin of his subsequent fortune. The myth of the mangy Calabrian:

"(...) siendo este Hasán Zuri guardián bají, dio una bofetada a un esclavo de nación calabrés que andaba al remo en una galera de Chovali, capitán de la mar, y por vengarse de él renegó, nombrándose Uluc Ali', que fue después famoso corsario en todo el mar Mediterráneo, y después subió a ser virrey de Argel y gran bajá de la armada turquesca. Tenía este renegado la cabeza pelada porque había sido tiñoso siendo niño, por eso le llamaban los turcos fataz, que significa tiñoso en su lengua. Teníanle puesto este apellido de tiñoso por diferenciarle de otro de su nombre que en su tiempo había en Argel, llamado Uchali Escandeliza, que fue mucho tiempo alcaide de la ciudad de Tremecén (...)".[21]

Uluç Ali arose from the *Muladíes* or corsairs already with vitality in the middle of the 16th century. From 1560, the mangy Calabrian would start a career that a decade later took him, after having saved his ships at the disaster of Lepanto, to be named captain of the sea or admiral of the Ottoman fleet, as had happened to

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20 *Archivo General de Simancas*, (hereafter AGS) *Estado, legajo* 487 (doc. 122) (1569) "Informe de Alonso Sánchez" ["Uluçali, now King of Algiers, is a native of the land delle Castelle, of the province of Calabria Ultra, was called by the name Dionisio [Galei]. At the age of 18, he was taken by the army of Barbarossa, when he took their land, on August 28, 1536. He was taken with his mother, Pippa del Chico and his brother."]

21 Diego Suárez, *Historia del maestre último que fue de Montesa*, Miguel Angel Bunes and Beatriz Alonso Acero (eds.), (Valencia: Instituciò Alfons el Magnànim, 2004 [1889]). See chapter XXX, pp. 350-354 ["When Hasan Zuri was guardian, he slapped a Calabrian slave who rowed the oar in a galley of Chovali, captain of the sea, and in order to take his avenge from him, [this slave] abjured and afterwards was called Uluçali, then a famous corsair all around the Mediterranean Sea, and he became viceroy of Algiers and was grand pasha of the Ottoman fleet. This renegade (Uluç Ali) had a bald head because it had been mangy since child, so the Turks called him *fataz*, meaning mangy in their tongue. The Turks called him *mangy* to distinguish him from another that was in Algiers in his time, called Uluçali Escandeliza, who was a long time governor of the city of Tlemcen."]

Hayrettin Barbarossa almost forty years before. Two parallel biographies, with many generations between them, completed the profiling of the myth of the fortunate *Muladí* at the Mediterranean frontier: the Corsair at the service of the Grand Turk.

As had happened with Hayrettin Barbarossa and his son Hasan Pasha, the progressive increase in Uluç Ali's power also meant the increased power of those within his circle of confidence; his large household, from which came the main seats of the Barbary government and the Ottoman army, a large customer base in which the corsairs *Muladíes* played a large role. Most of them were former slaves of Italians and good sailors, of the sea captain's house or the house of Uluç Ali. Both the correspondence of the Venetians *Bailos* relations in Istanbul and the Hispanic notices and information services, mostly coordinated from Naples and Sicily for their colonial governments, left a vivid picture of that mangy Calabrian, Dionisio [Galei], who came to organize and control one of the most flexible power structures in the Mediterranean. Starting from the absolute nothingness that is the condition of a young and poor sailor-slave, and mangy and despised even by other fellow slaves on the rowing galley, we can say that the illiterate but skillful and lucky *reis* corsair became a model or myth of social ascent in a possible Ottoman imperial meritocracy, which, undoubtedly, was how it was perceived by some on the border, particularly in the most disadvantaged sectors of the Spanish-Italian social strata and beyond.

A statement by the Venetian *Bailo*, Lorenzo Bernardo, made immediately after the Uluç Ali's death, in 1587,[22] is significant because it reflects the already consolidated myth:

"Era de nación Calabrés, de vil o humilde condición, y – hecho esclavo – ha bogado mucho tiempo al remo con la cadena. Pero era de tanto espíritu y valor que había ascendido a tanta grandeza con su ingenio, con universal estupor (...)"

Within the general astonishment of his epoch, the *Bailo* Bernardo emphasizes the force of the new model or myth itself, a marginal one within past conventions, but in line with what we may consider a "modern economic man", an entrepreneur or a businessman, perhaps even that of the self-made man, an idea of a mobilizing force on the frontier/s of this nascent modernity.

The Corsican in the frontier as a modern economic enterprise, or "los que hacen de su dios el interés" [23]

A year before his death in Istanbul, Uluç Ali received an unusual ambassador, to whom he also responded with a letter and a gift, the other exceptional seaman of that time, the English seaman and corsair Drake - *il Draco,* in the Venetian correspondence, which the anecdote cites as a figure parallel to Uluç Ali among the Atlantic sailors. In the context of Spanish preparations against England, such a confluence of two seamen was not strange, but it did acquire a great symbolism. Uluç Ali was seen as the champion of the supporters of an aggressive anti-Spanish naval policy, as he demonstrated and boasted of in this meeting. Moreover, he considered himself a free man, a Frank or freed slave, and a professional soldier, as he emphasized to the Venetian *Bailo* Bernardo when he said to Drake that he received from the war more good than harm like all professional soldiers, whilst he told a story from the time of his confrontation with Don Juan de Austria after Lepanto. The old Calabrian *reis* interprets in his own way, matching throughout his illustrious opponent:

"*Che dopoi la impressa della Goletta, havendo don Giovanni d'Austria preso una sua nave glie la rimandò con molta cortesia dicendo che fra di loro non si dovevano far male, ansi che pregava ogni giorno Dio per la sua vita, perche faceva per lui che il Re di Spagna havesse delli inimici che mantenessero la guerra perche di quel modo egli conservava la sua aiutta et la sua grandezza*".[24]

The war on the frontier was making professional soldiers powerful, rich and honoured, as occurred with Juan de Austria, step-brother of the king of Spain, and Uluç Ali, Turkish captain of the sea; both required these to advance their own interests. It was a reality that was overwhelming the former loyalties or natures of them both. A new reality that would play a leading role that Cervantes would present in a play written after returning

22 *Archivo de Estado de Venecia* (hereafter ASV), Dispacci Ambasciatori, Constantinopoli, filza 25, fols.413-421 ["He was of Calabrian nation, of vile or humble condition, and - enslaved - rowed for a long time in chains. But he was of so much courage and valor that he could rise to such a greatness thanks to his genius, with universal astonishment."]

23 Quotation of Cervantes. It means "people who convert their economic interest into their God."

24 ASV, ibid. filza 21, fols.279-293 (12.06.1585).

from his Algerian captivity, the *Trato de Argel* (Treat of Algiers). A current reading allows seeing it as a very lucid report of that new reality that had arisen on the classical Mediterranean frontier of the Habsburg-Ottoman confrontation. The new masters of the war were treating even the men as goods since they had turned business into their new god; Algiers, corsair or robber republic, could be seen as an emblem of this new reality, in which the old relations of loyalty and nature were replaced by *"la cruda y la mortal cizaña del robo, de la fraude y del engaño, del cambio injusto y trato con maraña."* He is the new man of the new times, the one *who "guardará por su dios al interese, y do éste no interviene, no se espere que por sola virtud bondad hiciese..."* [25]

With Uluç Ali it is possible to say that he fulfils the model and myth of the corsair *Muladí* at the service of the Great Turk. Though illiterate and of wretched origin, he managed to become the new great patron of the frontier, directing from Istanbul - from which he would not go westwards from 1581 up to his death - the most part of the business of the sea. The governments of Berberia was managed by men of his house, from his circle of confidence or clientele, and the Ottoman navy could not take to the sea without his galley-slave rabbles, one of the principal props of his income. Naval construction and public works, privateering and war made Uluç Ali and his clienteles rich and thus enabled his warmongering. Uluç Ali appears also as the principal player in the slave trade, forced or captive, as real manpower or momentary source of energy - as oil today - and his thousands of slaves also contributed to the public works both in the Levant and in Berberia, as well as to naval construction in the dockyards. Still, just before his death, the Venetian *Bailo* Bernardo presents him as an active elder who is designing the freight of several ships to provide to the *reis* and *levent*s of Berbería, one of his principal sources of income and power.[26] When they were not embarking from Istanbul in armed force, Uluç Ali and his people demonstrated their discomfort, since on occasion that meant the ruin of not a small part of them.

Frequently Uluç Ali put many of his slaves up for sale to avoid having to bear the expense of their sustenance whilst they remained inactive. Another of his principal functions, like captain of the sea - and here the Hispanic and Italian documentation are forceful - was as controller of the trade of Ottoman wheat, accompanied by continuous conflicts when the procedure of smuggling was rigorously applied in times of scarcity, penury or warlike tension. The episodes and conflicts that surrounded his economic and financial activity, including in the most diverse areas and sectors of activity turned out to be endless during those two long decades and up to his death. During this time, the Calabrians would turn in an important colony in the Ottoman Empire, with many *Muladíes* of Istanbul, according to a Venetian observer into Naples at the end of century.[27]

The culmination of the myth: Corsair-Muladí in the service of the Grand Turk: Ramazan Pasha and Hasan Pasha or Hasan Veneziano

Uluç Ali's household constituted an important power centre in Istanbul. From there came many great sailors and high-level officers in charge of different Ottoman provinces, especially in North Africa. Some Spanish reports speak of two or three thousand slaves, tens of *reis*, mostly *Muladíes* or Turks by profession. Some of them were his right-hand men, such as Murat Ağa from Luca or the Calabrian Cafer, Mami Kahya or Mami Corso, the usual targets for Habsburg agents who wanted to use their Christian relatives as intermediaries for bribes and deals. Two of these *Muladíes* stood out with the brilliant careers that they enjoyed under the shadow of Uluç Ali: The Sardinian Ramazan Pasha (1525-1582) and the Venetian Hasan Pasha, or Hasan Veneziano (1545-1591). Their biographies, whose details can be taken from Antonio de Sosa's *Epitome of the Kings of Algiers*, attest once again the archetypes, that of Sardinian Ramazan as a good leader, that of Hasan Veneziano as a cruel and despotic, yet effective, leader.

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25 From the piece of Cervantes, *Trato de Argel*, the discourse about the golden age by the captive Aurelio. ["(...) the crude and mortal darnel of theft, of fraud and of betrayal, of unjust change and treating with tangle"], ["he will guard interest as his god, and where it does not appear, don't hope for him to do any virtue or kindness (...)"].

26 ASV, ib. Filza 25.

27 I'm talking about Giocarlo Scaramelli, agent of Venice in Naples in 1600; his dispatches have been edited by Luigi Amabile in the vol. III of his *Fra Tommaso Campanella. La sua Congiura, i suoi processi ela sua pazzia (...)*, 3 vols. (Naples: A.Morano, 1882), quoted by myself in *La Conjura de Campanela* (Madrid: Turpín Ed., 2007).

In 1580, Ramazan Pasha left Algiers and went to Istanbul, and there was commissioned to rule Tripoli. He was an

"*(...) hombre de 55 años, de estatura no muy grande, ni pequeña, moreno de color, bien barbado y de pelo negro, cara redonda y de ambos ojos un poco bisojo; era hombre de buen gobierno (...) y amador de justicia y nada codicioso, y muy aficionado a la lición (sic, por lectura) de libros arabescos y turquescos, y de su ley; en los cuales de continuo ocupaba el tiempo que de los negocios le vacaba (...)*". [28]

And then Sosa makes an evocation of his family:

"*Nunca tuvo más de una sola mujer, renegada corsa; tenía un hijo de edad de 21 años, y dos hijas, la mayor casada con un renegado español rico, que se decía el alcaide Mamí Español, y otra con el alcaide Chader, hijo de un renegado napolitano*".[29]

Ramazan Pasha's family was a very wealthy family of ship owners formed after generations of crossbreeding and matrimonial alliances between *Muladíes*, Ottoman and Berbers. Barbarossa's son, Hasan Pasha, *koloğlu* or child of a Moorish Algerian, married a Berber or Kabyle from the Kingdom of Cuco and he was, in turn, an in-law of the Draguts, whose only daughter got married to her son Mahamet, grandson of Hayrettin Barbarossa. Among the Barbarrossa's captives from the Crag of Algiers in 1529 there was a couple of Spanish girls who were then married to notable Berbers, and later became mothers and mothers-in-law of notable Berber corsairs, the same as the sole Corsican captive wife of Ramazan Pasha, or the numerous cases of captives who remained as wives of notable Turks or Berbers, the most notable of which was Maria Gaitana, daughter of the warden of Reggio, captive and last wife of Hayrettin Barbarossa. These are examples which form another myth of the frontier, the Christian Captive, whose literary culmination is *La Gran Sultana* (The Grand Sultana) of Miguel de Cervantes, a play featuring Catalina de Oviedo; a myth parallel to that of the corsair *Muladí,* that of the Christian Captive, that has a firm grounding in reality; in Istanbul, at the same time of Uluç Ali, the *sultana* mother of Murat III was a Venetian captive of Corfu. Here appears another essential myth of social ascent of the frontier.[30]

The family of Ramazan Pasha came to a tragic end on returning to Istanbul after the death of Ramazan Pasha in Tripoli; assaulted by one of the ships in which the Venetian convicts' galleys of Guiglielmo Emo were carrying the family treasure, his widow and his eldest son were killed in the action, and the Venetians were obliged to execute Emo by decapitation to avoid a war with the Ottomans. It was the year 1584, and the following year Uluç Ali acted on the tragedy with all rigor, as protector of the surviving family of the former man.[31]

If Ramazan Pasha can be considered to be an honourable and praised model of the corsair *Muladí* in the service of the Grand Turk, even by Christians, Hasan Veneziano represents his counter-figure. Cervantes managed to label him as "a hangman of mankind" in *El Quijote*, and transforms him into the archetype of Berber cruelty, overtaking even his own boss Uluç Ali, about whom it was said that once angry there was none who could calm him. The portrait that Antonio de Sosa makes of him, is very restrained. In 1580

"(...) era hombre de 35 años, alto de cuerpo, flaco de carnes, los ojos grandes, encendidos y encarnizados, la nariz larga y afilada, la boca delgada, no demasiadamente barbado, de pelo como castaño y de color cetrino, que declina para

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28 Haedo, D. de, *Topografía,* I, pp.374 [" a 55 year old man, not very tall, neither great nor small, dark-colored, fine bearded, black hair, round face and both eyes slightly cross-eyed, was a man of good government (...) and a lover of justice and of nothing greedy, and very fond of reading turkish or arab books, and of his law (faith), in which he was continually occupied during the time left vacant, with no business to attend to."]

29 *Ibid*. [" (...) he never had any more than solely one woman, a renegade Corsican; he had a son of 21 years old, and two daughters, the eldest one married to a rich Spanish renegade, who called himself the warden Mamí Español, and other one with the warden Chader, son of a Napolitan renegade."]

30 The topic of the captive christian is outlined in Emilio Sola, "Historias de la frontera y oralidad: una cautiva que llega a Gran Sultana" in *Las relaciones de sucesos en España (1500-1700)* Maria de la Cruz García de Enterría et al. (eds.), (Alcalá: Publications de la Sorbonne y Servicio de publicaciones de la Universidad de Alcalá, 1996), as well as in Emilio Sola, "Cervantes y Turquía," *Cervantes y el Mediterráneo hispano-otomano* (Estanbul: Isis, 2006). See also A. Mas, *Les Turcs dans la littérature espagnole du Siècle d'Or* (Paris: Centre de Recherches Hispaniques, 1967).

31 See in www.archivodelafrontera.com, (Mediterranean section) the documents from the ASV, Disp.Ambasc. Constantinopoli, filzas 20 and 21 (correspondence of the *bailo* Morosini: "*El tono de los grandes negocios: la reclamación de los herederos de Ramadan Pasha,"* and *"Un catalán en Estambul. El principal testigo de la tragedia de la galera negra de Ramazan Pasha, en el otoño de 1584.*")

amarillo, señales todas de su mala condición (...)" [32]

Both Ramazan Pasha and Hasan Veneziano, like their boss Uluç Ali, were of very humble origin, the first a Sardinian goat-shepherd and the second a cabin boy on a Ragusean ship, his Christian name being Andrea Celeste or Celestrio. Their genealogies adjust perfectly to this myth anchored in the reality of the social ascent of the lucky corsair *Muladí*. Some features of Hasan Veneziano's biography, in addition, fulfil the myth more forcefully that of his boss the Calabrian, who died without family, and whose goods passed to the Grand Signor. After the death of the king of Morocco, Abd al-Malik, in the battle of Al Qasr-al-Kabîr or "The battle of Three Kings" (1578), Hasan Veneziano managed to marry his widow in Algiers, the daughter of Hadji Murat - one of the richest men of the city, and of Hungarian origin - which allowed him to become the tutor of the son of the dead Moroccan king, Ismael, in front of his uncle, Mansur, the new king. With his new wife and his stepson, Hasan Veneziano travelled to Istanbul, but only upon Uluç Ali's death in 1587, did he manage to succeed in his career as new captain of the sea or admiral of the Turkish fleet. We see again another exemplary biography of a winner of the frontier, with multiple possibilities and opportunities available.

Maybe one of the most suggestive episodes of these corsair sagas is the process of Hasan Veneziano's liberation from the control exercised upon him by his master and boss, Uluç Ali, throughout the eighties and up to his death in 1587. His efforts of all kinds to prosper, from wheat speculation in moments of scarcity and plague up to the appropriation of foreign slaves or the capricious increase of impositions and taxes, which transformed him into an archetype of the tyrannical governor, only lead to men being sent to kill him by his former boss, the Calabrian, who felt cheated by his former slave and who managed to divest him of his goods in Istanbul. Only upon Uluç Ali's death would Hasan Veneziano, reported by Venetian observers to already be a very rich man, capable of great undertakings, manage to accede to the supreme control of the Turkish navy. Already at this point he could even demand the house of Gio [Giovanni] Moro, the Venetian attorney's office, for his sister who continued to live there, as a grace of the doge Cicogna. His friendship was appreciated by the Venetians, although in confidence they occasionally referred to him as "*quella bestia di Assan Bassà*".[33]

It is Hasan Veneziano who is really the culmination of the myth of the search for fortune on the frontier, the corsair *Muladí* in the service of the Great Turk capable ascending by any means necessary from a slave's very poor condition to that of a great tycoon with great influence and a wide clientele.

Scipion Cicala or Sinan Pasha, brilliant end of a classicism corsair-Muladí: Campanella's conspiracy

Hasan Veneziano's death was related to another prominent *Muladí* of the Ottoman court, one who had already been an opponent of Uluç Ali and who was yet another representative of the frontier myth of the man of fortune, i.e. *Muladíes* that arose in the service of the Grand Turk. According to some sources, the Venetian Hasan was poisoned by Cigalazade Yusuf Sinan Pasha, whose Christian name was Scipion Cicala, from an old and famous family of Genoese corsairs settled in Messina. In the summer and the autumn of 1561, news circulated throughout the Mediterranean that Dragut had captured the *Visconte* Cicala and his 15 / 16 year old son, Scipion. The two were led at once to Istanbul where Scipion was presented to Süleyman the Magnificent. In a moment of intense negotiation for the ransoming of numerous Spanish and Italian prisoners after the defeat at Djerba in 1560, Scipion Cicala became a "Turk" and remained in the Topkapı Palace, where he then married an Ottoman *Sultana* and attained important military responsibilities including the command of the Ottoman army fighting in Persia as well as prominent offices such as Governor-General of Babylonia, Grand Admiral and, for a brief period, Grand Vizier.

For some time until the 1590s he challenged the Calabrian Uluç Ali for the post of Grand Admiral, and in the literature of news he was always considered in light of the shifts between his gains and losses of influence in Istanbul. The fact his mother, lady Lucrezia, was a Turkish captive, daughter of the Ottoman governor of Castelnovo, makes the myth of this *Muladí* corsair in the service of the Grand Turk yet more demonstrative and complex. After the death of Hasan Veneziano, Cigalazade Sinan Pasha would obtain the post of Grand Admiral, in spite of opposition from the court cliques who considered him too Italian. The sack of the Reggio

32 Haedo, D. de, *Topografía*, I, p. 388. ["(...) he was a man of 35-year-old, tall in stature, skinny, with big eyes; burning and fierce, a long and sharp nose, a thin mouth, not excessively bearded and brown hair of sallow color, which declines into yellow, signaling to all his bad condition (...)"]

33 ASV, Dispac. Ambasciat. Constantinopoli, filza 25, fols.553-560 ("Gio Moro to the dux Cicogna" 18.08.1587).

di Calabria in 1593, the visit to his mother in Messina in 1598 and the support he planned to give to the anti-Spanish, anti-Papal conspiracy of Tomas Campanella in 1599, all constituted a new zenith for the myth of the *Muladí* corsair at the service of the Grand Turk.

Like the Greek/Turkish Barbarossa brothers, the Bosnian Sinan Pasha or the Alexandrine Salih Pasha or Arap Ahmed, who were omitted here as this article focuses exclusively on Italian *Muladíes*, the two Sardinians Hasan Ağa and Ramazan Pasha, the Corsican Hasan Corso, Hasan Veneziano or Yusuf, Ali Pasha (Uluç Ali) from Calabria, Cigalazade Sinan Pasha, the son of a Genoese-Sicilian and a Turk, were all other figures who became part of this Mediterranean frontier-land myth of man of fortune. Global and polysemic, this is an authentically popular myth, a myth that survived all over in spite of the official imposition of nationalistic and denominational statements; one can say that some tried to cut it from the roots of the Christian European collective memory, at last from that of the *vox populi*. One of these key moments in which the historians of popular culture, such as Peter Burke or Mikhail Bakhtin, see the major official cultural effort to christianise the European masses, a phenomenon that today we know as Renaissance and Reform, Counter-reformation, and Baroque. It is a long history, and here we have only referred to the most demonstrative part of that reality. However, there are many other prominent figures in the documentation, especially seamen, who would extend this list of dissidents in a European classical period of our history. We now have to rewrite from new perspectives, and to take into account the work of Cervantes that gives important clues to the construction of such perspectives.

It is significant that Hasan Veneziano and Uluç Ali Pasha – or Andreta Celeste and Dionysus [Galei], to give their Christian names - have been eliminated radically from an Italian history where important sailors such as Christopher Colomb or Américo Vespucio have been given important roles. Without any doubt, they belong in the genealogy of the modern economic man, of the self-made entrepreneur, of the businessman, of the politician, or professional military man, and their careers cannot be erased with the stroke of a pen or by simply associating them with dissidence or with picaresque literature.

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